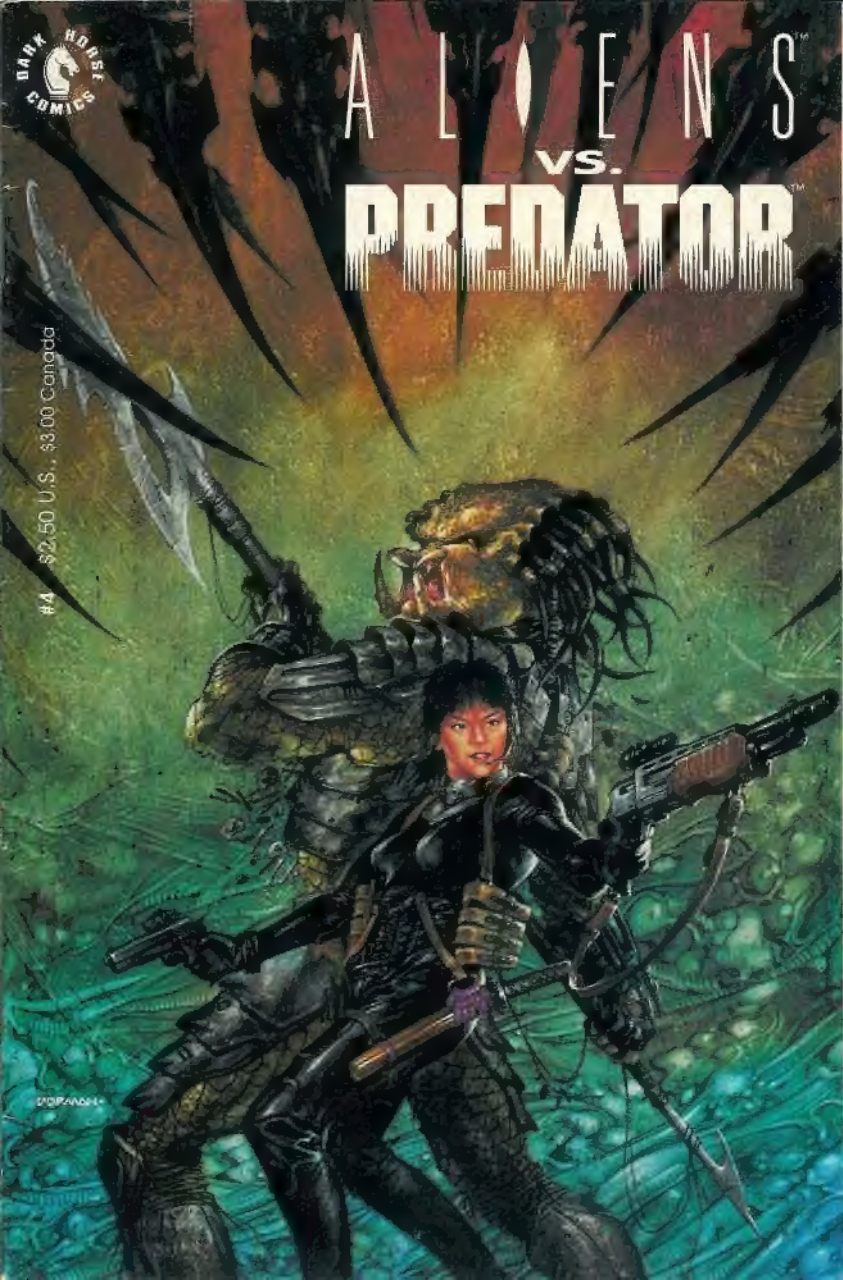
DARK HORSE COMICS
ALIENS™
VS.
PREDATOR™
#4 $2.50 U.S. $3.00 Canada

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Credit Where Credit is Due:
Apologies to both Robert Campanella and Karl Story for the mix-up on last issue's inking credits. Although Robert was actually responsible for inking Phil Norwood's pencils on issue #3, Karl was inadvertently given credit for the job — and somehow the mistake slipped past ye editor's usual eagle eye. *Mea culpa!* I feel heartsick over this. Won't someone beat me?
— Diana Schutz

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PRINTED IN CANADA

Prosperity Wells, the Chigusa Corporation's ranching outpost on the planet Ryushi, has become a war zone. On one side: a band of enraged and untrained young **Predators**, left leaderless when their guide was wounded before their hunt, a cyclical "coming of age" rite, could begin. Opposing them: a ravaging army of **Aliens**, brought to the planet by the Predators for the hunt. Caught in the middle: 115 nearly defenseless human colonists.

A visiting star freighter, ***The Lector***, is viewed by many as a means out of the line of fire and off the planet to safety, but **Machiko Noguchi**, Chigusa's on-site manager, discovers that the ship has been overrun by the Aliens. She makes it back to the colony's Operations Center in time to prevent the settlers from making an attempt to reach *The Lector*, but too late to save her friend **Hiroki**, who dies trying to prevent the Predators from gaining access to the tower.

Meanwhile, *The Lector*'s two pilots, **Strandberg** and **Conover**, who have been cocooned by the Aliens' **Queen** inside their ship, manage to break free and escape during the Aliens' battle with the Predators. They emerge just in time to witness the battle in full swing.

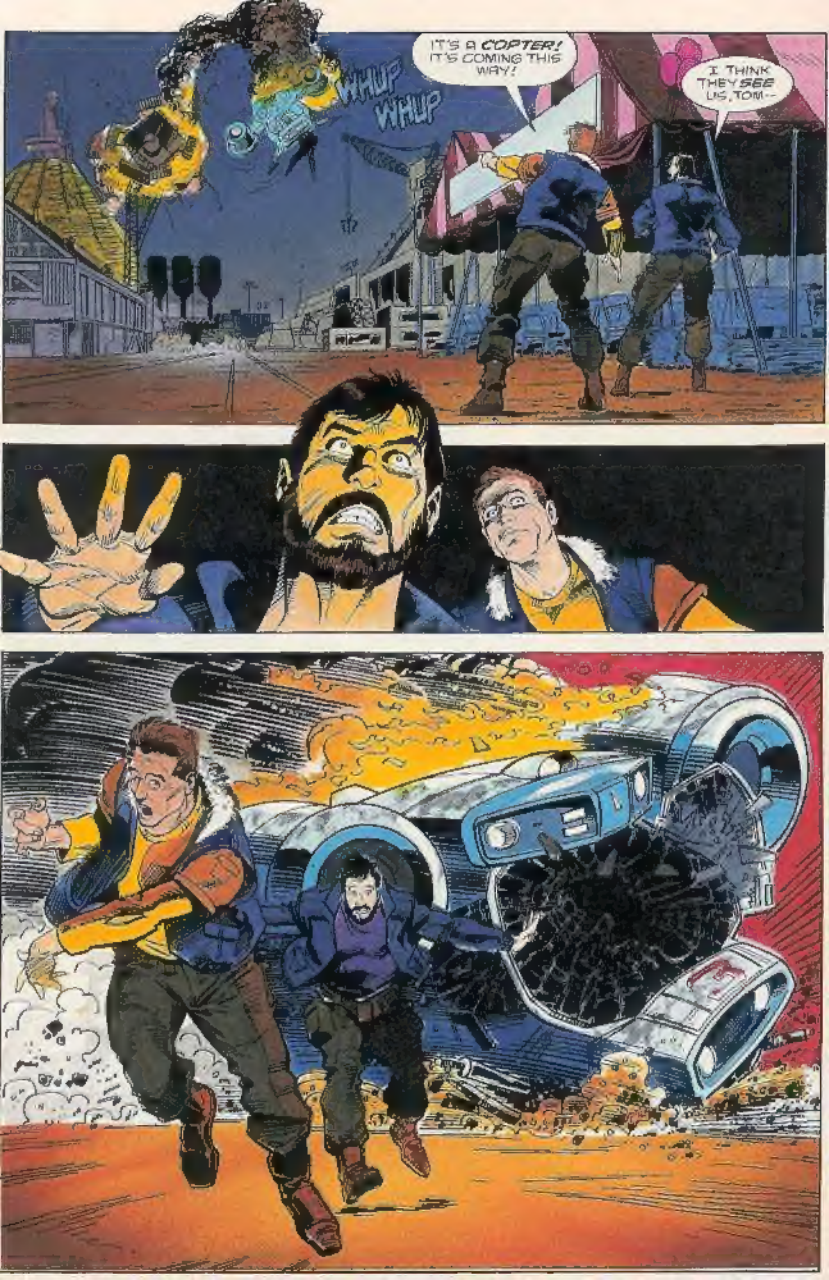
Machiko comes up with a plan she believes will allow the colonists a chance to escape into the surrounding desert, but before she can put it into action she's alerted to a commotion in the Medical Center. **Dr. Miriam Revna**, who has been caring for the wounded leader of the Predator expedition, is attacked by one of the marauding young Predators. Intervention by the grizzled, broken-tusked Predator leader saves her. **Broken Tusk** examines the younger Predator's trophies and is enraged when he finds the skull of a human child among them — an apparent violation of Predator hunting ethics. While the two Predators battle to the death, Machiko and Dr. Revna take off in the colony's only copter to put Machiko's plan into effect — stampeding the colonists' rhino-like herd animals, and disrupting the Predator/Alien battle — crushing many of the combatants.

The colonists make good their escape, but Machiko is torn between joining them, or attempting to save the apparently friendly Broken Tusk...

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE'RE FORCED TO MAKE SPLIT-SECOND DECISIONS.
SOMETIMES WE CHOOSE WISELY, AND THE RESULTS PLEASE US.
OTHER TIMES OUR CHOICES GET US INTO TROUBLE.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THE DECISION TO RESCUE THE BROKEN-TUSKED WARRIOR WAS A GOOD CHOICE OR A BAD ONE.
I DO KNOW IT WAS A CRAZY ONE. IT WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE RESCUE--EVEN A TRAINED PILOT WOULD HAVE BALKED.
BUT THE WARRIOR HAD PROVED HIMSELF DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF HIS KIND WHO HAD KILLED HIROKI AND THE OTHERS. BY SAVING MIRIAM'S LIFE...
...AND, LIKE HIROKI, HE REFUSED TO GIVE UP FIGHTING.
I COULD RESPECT THAT.
WHUP WHUP WHUP
GRAB ON!

THIS IS RIDICULOUS, MIRIAM! I CAN'T HOLD US HERE MUCH LONGER--
--AND HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD YOU'RE--
NEVER MIND! HANG ON!
GRAB THE STRUT! WE'LL TAKE YOU TO SAFETY!
OH, SHIT.
I REACTED INSTINCTIVELY, JERKING THE CONTROLS, AND THE COPTER SPUN ON ITS AXIS--JUST LIKE A HOVER BIKE.
BUT THAT'S WHERE THE SIMILARITIES ENDED.
WHUP WHUP
WRUNCH!


WHUP WHUP
IT'S A COPTER! IT'S COMING THIS WAY!
I THINK THEY SEE US, TOM--

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED IT'D BE YOU. YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE, LADY!
JESUS, WHO THE HELL TAUGHT YOU TO FLY?
NO ONE... YET.
WHERE'S MIRIAM?
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! WE'RE GONNA BE UP TO OUR EYEBALLS IN BUGS IN A MINUTE!
WHERE'S MIRIAM?
WHO?
Dr. REVNA-- THE WOMAN WHO WAS IN THE COPTER WITH ME! I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT HER!
I DIDN'T SEE ANYONE ELSE--
OH, JESUS...

SOMEONE ELSE WAS DEAD...SOMEONE I'D CARED ABOUT...
...SOMEONE WHO'D DEPENDED ON ME.
OH, MIRIAM...I'M SORRY...
GRAB THE STRUT--WE'LL PULL YOU TO SAFETY.

CONOVER AND STRANDBERG WERE THE LAST TWO PEOPLE IN PROSPERITY WELLS I'D HAVE WISHED TO BE STRANDED WITH, BUT NOW THAT MIRIAM WAS DEAD, THEY WERE THE LAST TWO PEOPLE.
SOMEHOW, THEY'D MISSED THE EVENTS OF THE PAST TWENTY-EIGHT HOURS. I BROUGHT THEM UP TO DATE...
I TOLD THEM WHAT I KNEW OF OUR COMPANION AND HIS KIND-- HOW THEY HAD ARRIVED EQUIPPED FOR A SHEARI. I EXPLAINED MY THEORY ABOUT THE BUGS-- AS THEY CALLED THEM--AND THE WARRIORS BEING SOMEHOW CONNECTED.
ARE YOU SAYING THEY LET THOSE BUGS LOOSE ON A POPULATED PLANET SO THEY COULD HUNT THEM?
I DON'T BELIEVE HIS KIND KNEW THERE WERE HUMANS ON RYUSHI. WE HAVEN'T BEEN HERE LONG-- I DOUBT WE WERE HERE THE LAST TIME THEY DROPPED IN.
IN FACT, OUR PRESENCE PROBABLY SCREWED UP THEIR PLANS.
OH, GREAT! I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER KNOWING THAT THIS WHOLE MESS WAS AN ACCIDENT!
HEY, AT LEAST HE'S ON OUR SIDE.
YEAH? PROBABLY ONLY UNTIL HE GETS HUNGRY...

THIS IS WHERE THE STAMPEDE CAME THROUGH.
WOW! WHEN YOU KILL SOMETHING, YOU DON'T FOOL AROUND.
DO YOU THINK THE STAMPEDE GOT THEM ALL?
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN SCRATCHED THE SURFACE!
RUN!
FOLLOW THE TOWER AROUND-- THE EAST LOCK IS OPEN!

I HALF EXPECTED A REPLAY OF THE LOST BATTLES I'D SEEN EARLIER
BUT THE BROKEN TUSKED WARRIOR WAS NO INEXPERIENCED NOVICE
HE MEASURED EVERY STEP
--TIMED EVERY STRIKE

THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE WAS NEVER IN DOUBT
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
I JUST DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WAIT FOR IT
SORRY
...BUT WE'VE GOT TO GO
CHUK
HURRY!
Okay WE'RE IN
WHAT'S THE PLAN?

WELL, THE COLONISTS MADE IT OUT SAFELY. THAT'S THE MAIN THING. WE'VE GOT POWER HERE, WATER, AND FOOD.

I GUESS WE'LL JUST SEAL OUR SELVES IN AND WAIT FOR THE MARINES.

WRONG. THE MARINES AREN'T COMING. SEEMS YOUR BOSS WANTS THE BUGS ALIVE--

LET ME SEE THAT!

FROM: MAKASHI HIGUSA
NEW OSAKA
TO: MACHIKO NOGUCHI
FAIRWEATHER WELLS

MOST IMMEDIATE REQUEST
U.S. MARINE INTERVENTION
DENIED. TAKE STEPS TO
PRESERVE ALL SPECIMENS OF
SPECIES DESCRIBED IN REVINA'S
REPORT. PROCEED WITH
MEASURES TO INSURE SAFETY
OF ALL PERSONNEL BUT TAKE
NO ACTION AGAINST JUVENILE
XT SPECIMENS.
AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS FROM
SAIGERU CHIGUSA ARRIVING
ON MAGUKI MARU.

SCREW THAT SHIT! I SAY WE SCRAM OUT OF HERE AND JOIN THE COLONISTS!

YEAH? AND HOW LONG BEFORE THE BUGS SPREAD INTO THE DESERT?

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU TWO BUT I'M TIRED OF BEING PUSHED AROUND.

I WANT TO START PUSHING BACK.

SURE -- WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO? BURN DOWN THE WHOLE COMPLEX?
I DON'T THINK THAT'D WORK SCOTT. TOO MANY OF THEM WOULD GET AWAY. IT'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING FAST...
MAYBE OUR FRIEND HERE HAS SOME IDEAS-- A DEATH RAY OR SOME THING!
YOU TALKING ABOUT WHAT I THINK YOU ARE? FORGET IT!
DON'T HOLD OUT ON ME CONOVER! IF YOU KNOW A WAY TO STOP THESE THINGS YOU'D BETTER TELL ME
I'M SERIOUS. I THINK MACHINE COULD HAVE THE RIGHT IDEA WITH THE STAMPEDE. THEY'RE BIGGER, WHY NOT CRUSH EM?
HER FOOT WAS JUST LOOK TOO SMALL. YOU NEED SOMETHING LOOK BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE OUT THE WHOLE COMPLEX AND THE LECTOR AT ONCE
YOU KNOW HOW MANY SKIDREES I HAVE RIDING ON
TOM! WHA?
NNNNG!
AVAVAVAVAGGHHHA!!
SKREEE
SNIK

"Okay, EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED IS ON THE DISK."

"THANKS, CONOVER."

"GONNA BE TOUGH GETTING IN."

"DON'T WORRY. WE'LL FIND A WAY."

"I DON'T [COFF] DOUBT THAT FOR A MINUTE. YOU KNOW IF THIS WORKS, THE COMPANY'S GONNA BE PISSED."

SCREW THE COMPANY.

I WAS [COFF] HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT."

EASY WHUD WHUMP WHUMP

HERE'S A [COFF] A GOING AWAY PRESENT. A MAP OF THE LECTOR.

SOUNDS LIKE EVERY [COFF] BUG IN THE PLACE IS TRYING TO GET IN.

IT'S ALL RIGHT--WE'RE READY TO GO.

ALMOST.

[COFF] I GUESS [COFF COFF] IT'S TIME TO KEEP YOUR HALF OF THE BARGAIN. IF YOU CAN.

I CAN MAKE IT QUICKER EASIER--FOR YOU.

NO. I MADE THE PROMISE I'LL DO IT.

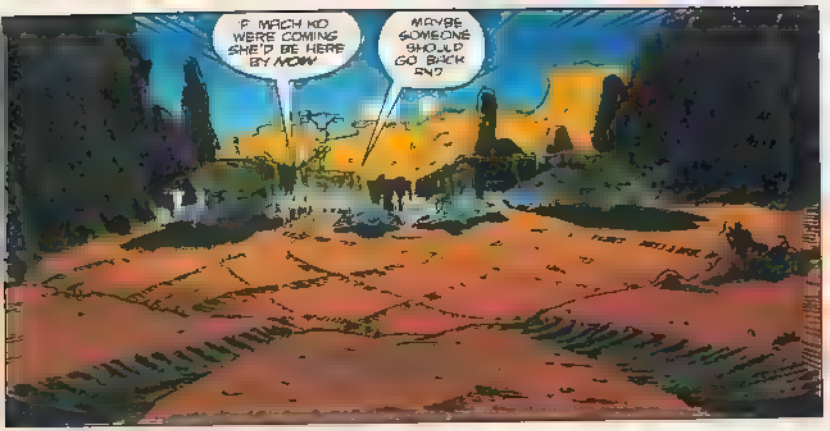
JESUS. IT'S WEIRD HEARING YOUR VOICE COME OUT OF HIM. [COFF] JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING. [COFF] WHAT IF HE'S REALLY A SHI- [COFF COFF]

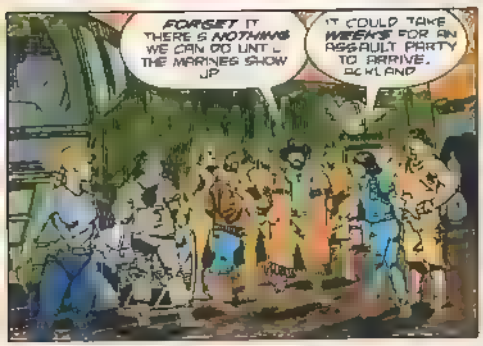
AW. NEVER MIND. [COFF] UHHH.

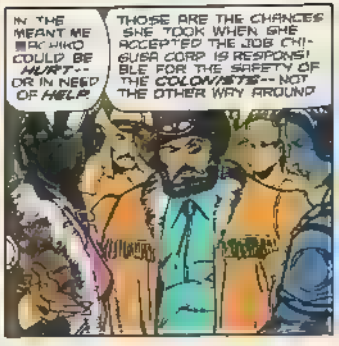
JUST- UHH DO IT!

CONOVER.

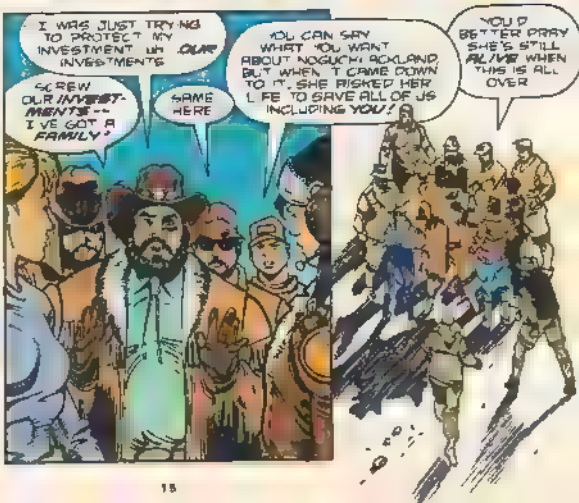
I... REMEMBER YOU.

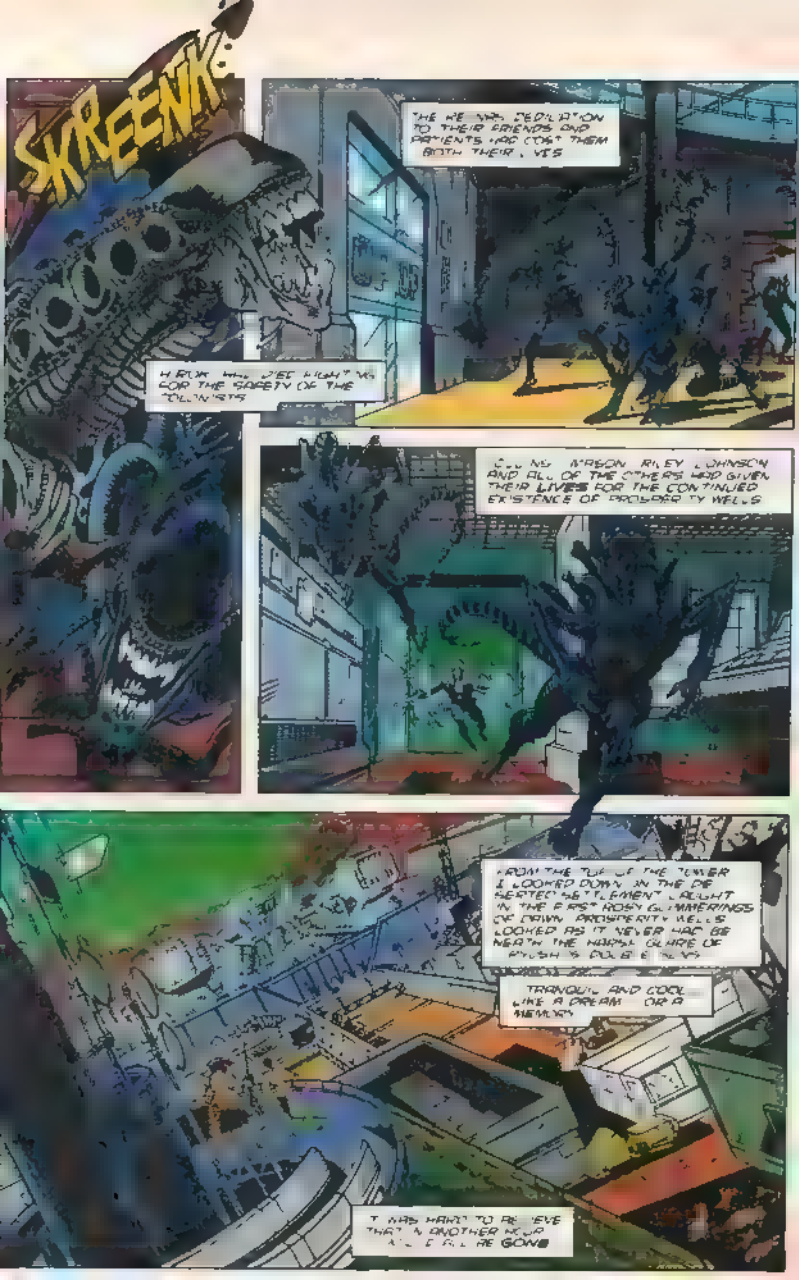

IF MACHIKO WERE COMING SHE'D BE HERE BY NOW
MAYBE SOMEONE SHOULD GO BACK AND


FORGET IT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO UNTIL THE MARINES SHOW UP
IT COULD TAKE WEEKS FOR AN ASSAULT PARTY TO ARRIVE, ROKLAND


IN THE MEANTIME MACHIKO COULD BE HURT -- OR IN NEED OF HELP
THOSE ARE THE CHANCES SHE TOOK WHEN SHE ACCEPTED THE JOB CHIGUSA CORP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF THE COLONISTS -- NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

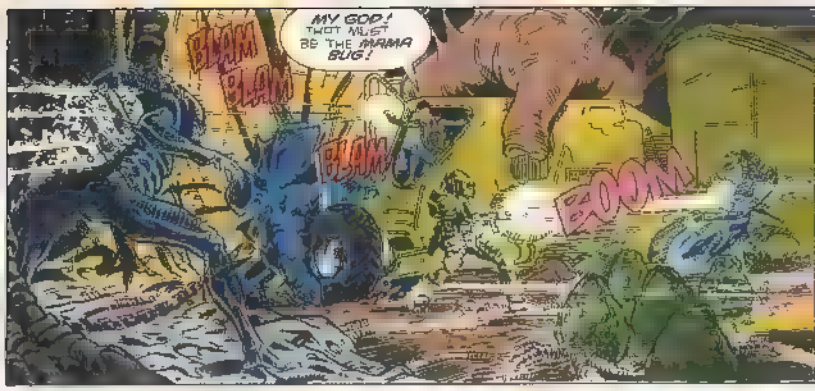
YOU BASTARD! YOU CAN'T SHOVE THIS ALL OFF ON THE COMPANY YOU HAD ME LIE TO DOC REYNA ABOUT WHERE WE FOUND THOSE CREATURES AND IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO SNEAK THOSE SICK RHYNTH PAST OUR ANTINE
UH LOOK YOU KNOW WHAT A HARD-ASS NOGUCHI IS


I WAS JUST TRYING TO PROTECT MY INVESTMENT UH OUR
SCREW OUR INVESTMENTS -- I'VE GOT A FAMILY!
SAME HERE
YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT NOGUCHI ROKLAND BUT WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT, SHE RISKED HER LIFE TO SAVE ALL OF US INCLUDING YOU!
YOU'D BETTER PRAY SHE'S STILL ALIVE WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER

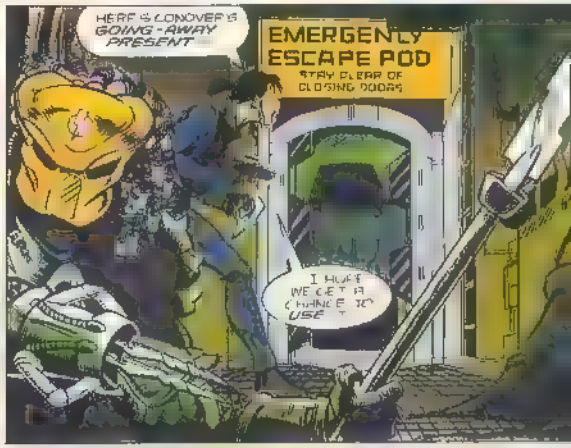

SKREENK
THE REMARKABLE DEDICATION TO THEIR FRIENDS AND PATRIONS HAD COST THEM BOTH THEIR LIVES
HERON HAD DIED FIGHTING FOR THE SAFETY OF THE COLONISTS
SO NOW MARSON RILEY JOHNSON AND ALL OF THE OTHERS HAD GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF PROSPERITY WELLS
FROM THE TOP OF THE TOWER I LOOKED DOWN ON THE DEPARTED SETTLEMENT. FLIGHT IN THE FIRST ROSY GLIMMERINGS OF DAWN PROSPERITY WELLS LOOKED AS IT NEVER HAD BENEATH THE HARSH GLARE OF PRUSH'S DOUBLE SUNS
TRANQUIL AND COOL LIKE A DREAM OR A MEMORY
IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANOTHER WORLD ALL ELSE HAD GONE

AND THAT WE MIGHT BE DEAD
NEVER MIND THEM-- GET TO THE TRACTOR!

OUR JOB WOULD HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE ONE IF THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN THE UP CENTER HAD BEEN OPERATIONAL-- BUT MY COPTER RIDE HAD TRASHED THE MAIN ANTENNA
STRANGERS AND CONLIVER'S PLAN REQUIRED AN OFF-PLANET TRANSMISSION AND THAT MEANT A TRIP TO THE LECTOR.
- BUG CENTRAL
KRASH
SKREEEEEEE
SKKRUNCH


MY GOD! THOT MUST BE THE MAMA BUG!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM

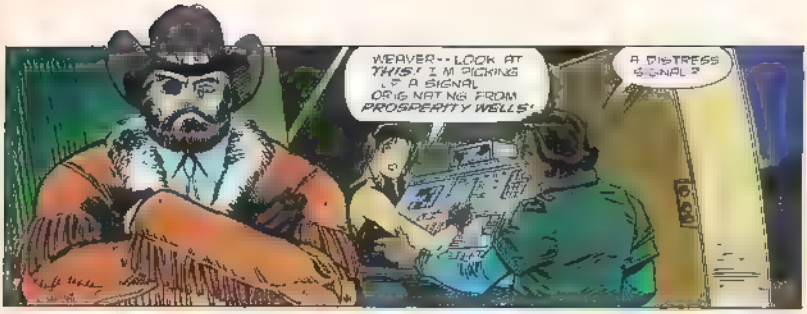
THIS WAY!

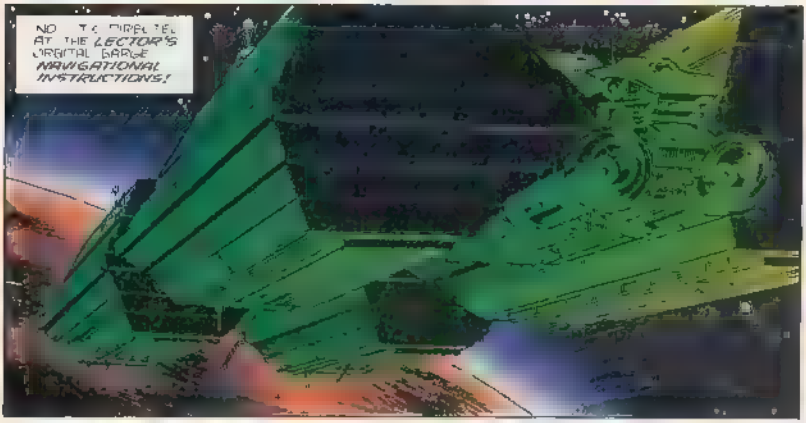

HERE'S CONOVER'S GOING-AWAY PRESENT
EMERGENCY ESCAPE POD
STAY CLEAR OF CLOSING DOORS
I HOPE WE GET A CHANCE TO USE IT

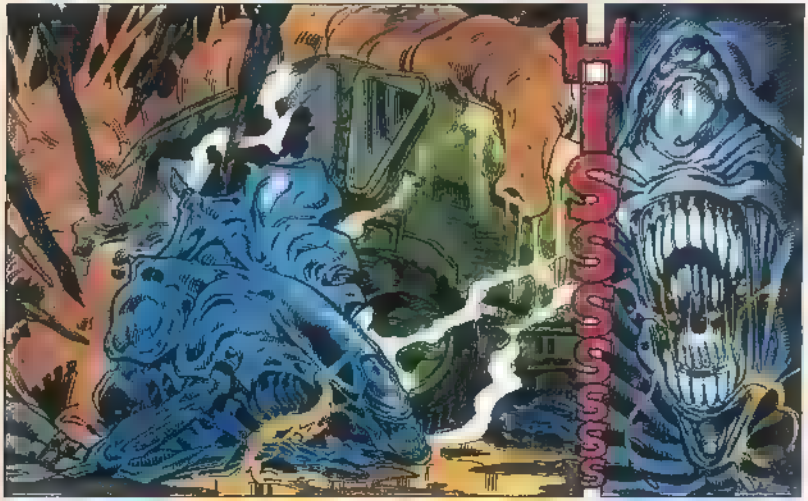
HOLD THE FORT! I'LL BE BACK

WHEN I'M DONE

BIG SHIP
FOR ALL HER SIZE THE LECTOR WAS ONLY A TUG--
TINY COMPARED TO THE MASSIVE REFRIGERATED BARGE SHE TOWED ACROSS THE HEAVENS
SSSSS
THE BUGS HAD TAKEN CONTROL OF THE LECTOR-- TURNING IT INTO A VIRTUAL BUG FORTRESS
BAM
BAM
BAM
BUT IF THE PLAN WORKED.
WE'D SHOW THE BUGS JUST HOW SMALL AND EXPOSED THEIR FORTRESS WAS
WHK
DO YOUR STUFF COMPUTER


WEAVER--LOOK AT THIS! I'M PICKING UP A SIGNAL ORIGINATING FROM PROSPERITY WELLS!
A DISTRESS SIGNAL?

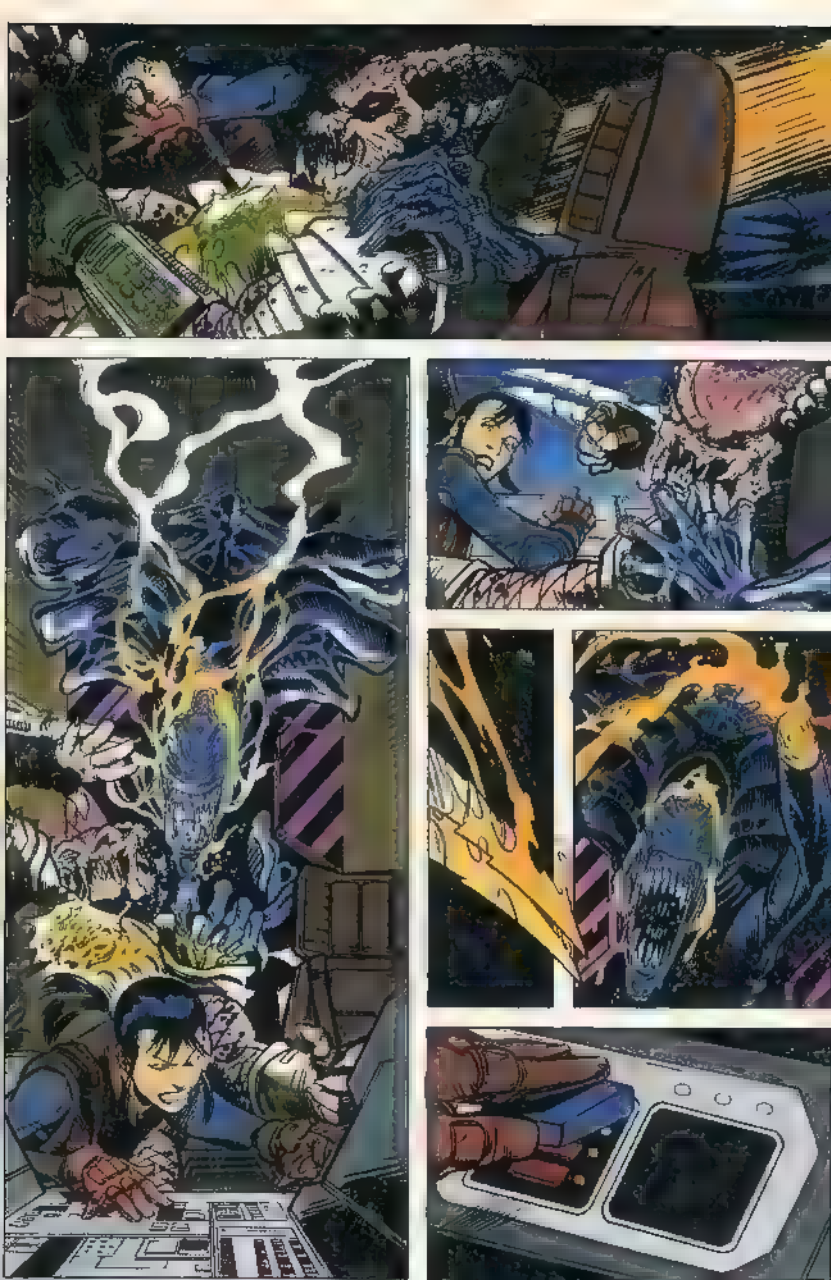

NO... I'M DIRECTING AT THE LECTOR'S ORBITAL BARGE NAVIGATIONAL INSTRUCTIONS!


HISSSSSSSSSSSS

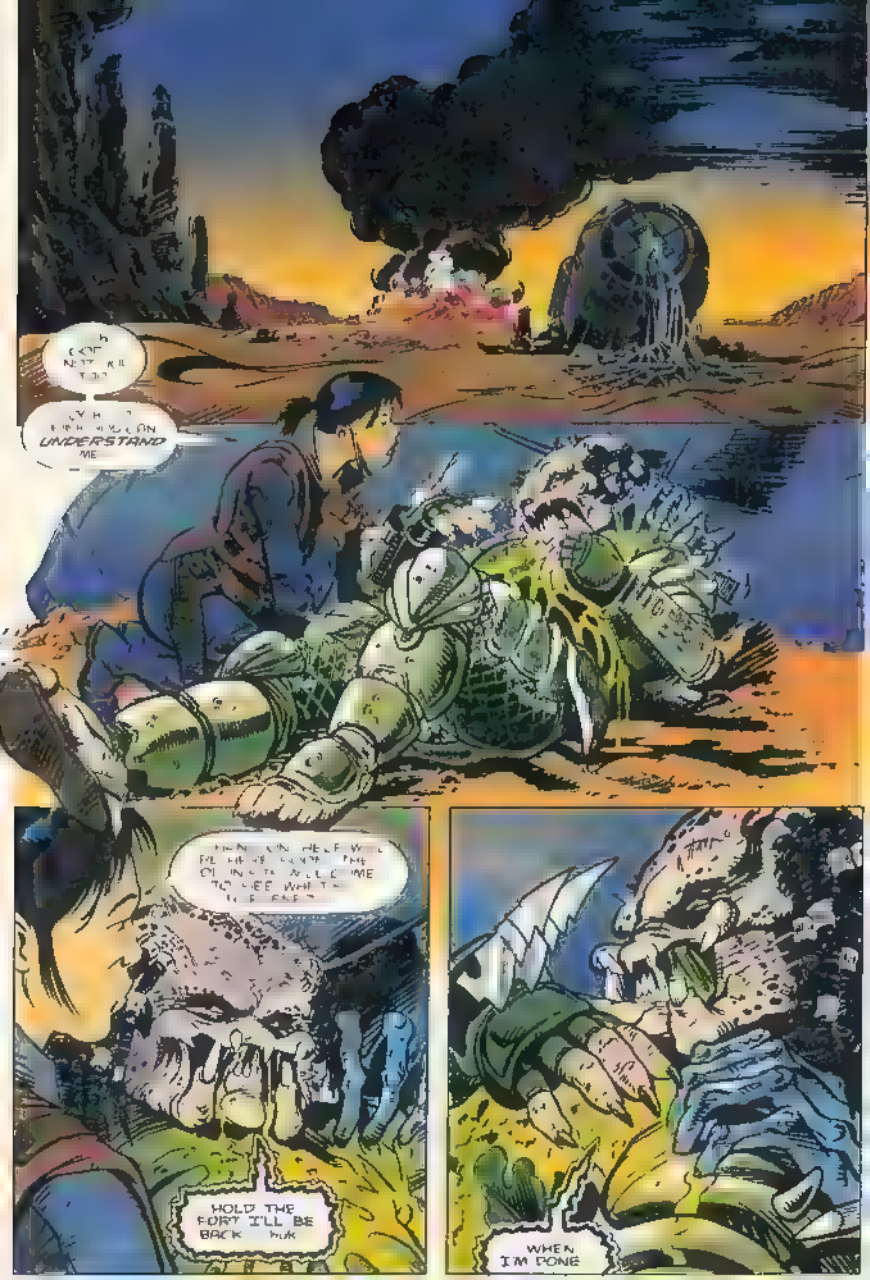
HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

SNAP
CHUK
RRAAASKK
HEY MAMA

SHREEEEEEEK!
SAY TA REST!
I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR A MINUTE CAN I?
FSSSSST FSSSS
TAKE IT EASY FIVE SECONDS AND WE'RE GONE



EMERGENCY LAUNCH
WH
AHKHSSSSSHHHH
SHUD

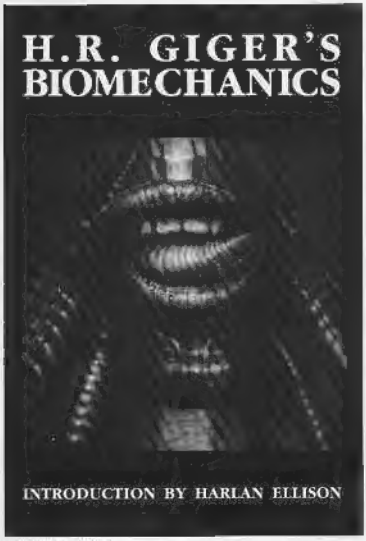

UNDERSTAND
HOLD THE FORT I'LL BE BACK HUK
WHEN I'M DONE

CRIK
SNAKT
...A GOING-AWAY PRESENT...
FSSSSSHT
3 hun's... REMEMBER YOU...

AFTER THAT, THE COMPANY DECLARED PROSPERITY WELLS A "WRITE-OFF." THE COLONISTS WERE GIVEN PASSAGE TO A FRIENDLIER LOCATION IN THE RISEL SYSTEM, AND CHIGUSA CORP. PULLED OUT OF CYGNI.
THEY SAID IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT MY ACTIONS WERE DICTATED BY NECESSITY--BUT MY CONTRACT WAS BOUGHT OUT. I EXPECTED NO LESS.
THEY WERE NICE ENOUGH, THOUGH--I WAS OFFERED PASSAGE BACK TO EARTH, AND WITH THE CREDITS FROM THE BUY-OUT, I COULD HAVE STARTED AGAIN.
I GUESS I SHOCKED THEM WHEN I SAID I WAS STAYING. IT JUST SEEMED THAT EVERYTHING I'D EVER CARED ABOUT--OR LEARNED TO CARE ABOUT--WAS ON RYUSHI.
THAT WAS TWO YEARS AGO. "QUIET" DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF HAVING AN ENTIRE PLANET TO ONESELF. BUT I'VE GOTTEN USED TO IT.
BESIDES, I KNOW THAT BROKEN TUSK'S PEOPLE WILL BE BACK SOMEDAY WITH A NEW BATCH OF BUGS.
THEN MAYBE I'LL DO A LITTLE HUNTING.
THE END

H.R. GIGER'S BIOMECHANICS

INTRODUCTION BY HARLAN ELLISON



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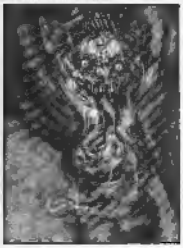

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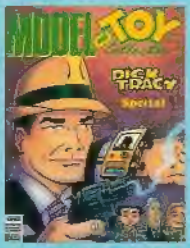
YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T READ...



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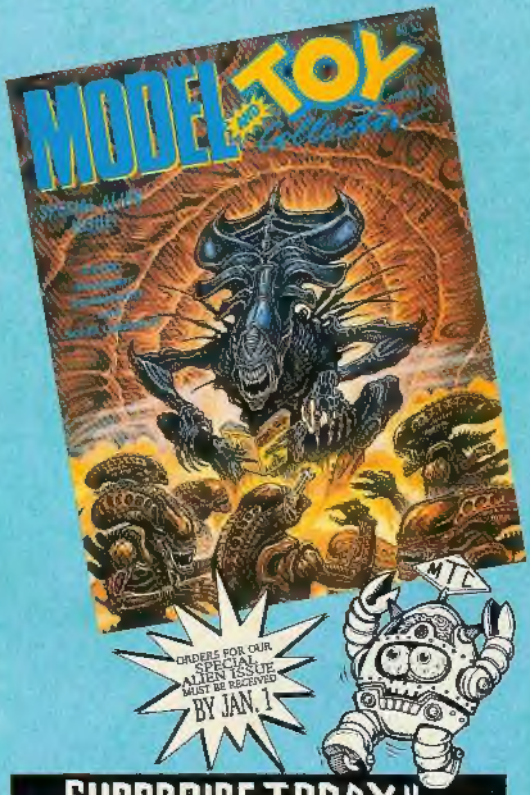

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